

D R A F T WIC Accommodation ltr Mac/(m)/Jim Ramsay Folder

[PM USA Stationery]

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[Name of Contact at Vendor]
[Vendor's Business Name]
[Address]

Dear _____:

Workplace smoking has become an issue in an increasing number of businesses. Today, many states and municipalities require employers to have a written smoking policy, and these laws often give preference to the non-smoker in any workplace smoking dispute.

At Philip Morris, we believe that non-smoking employees who do not wish to be exposed to cigarette smoke deserve to be accommodated. But we also believe that reasonable accommodation should be extended to smokers, who comprise one-third of the adult population and therefore one-third of the workforce.

We support accommodation, not simply because the rights of our consumers are involved, but because we believe accommodation is a more equitable and -- in the long run -- more efficient and productive workplace policy.

Employees who see their rights and preferences treated with respect by management enjoy better morale. Accommodation fosters an atmosphere of mutual respect and goodwill within a company, prompting employees to contribute greater effort on the company's behalf.

The members of the organized anti-smoking movement have targeted the workplace as a major battleground in their war on smoking. Their goal is to ban not just smoking on the job, but smokers, too.

In pursuit of their goals, the members of the anti-smoking movement have popularized several myths about smokers and smoking in the workplace. A look at the facts, however, dispels these myths.

MYTH #1: Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) in the workplace is harmful to non-smoking workers.

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Tobacco smoke in the air dissipates quickly. Studies at Harvard have determined that a person would have to spend over 100 hours in the smokiest environment to absorb the nicotine equivalent of even one cigarette. Studies have consistently found no statistically significant risk of lung cancer from exposure to ETS in the workplace, restaurants or in other public places. In fact, the Chairman of the EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB), recently said that no conclusions can be drawn regarding any health risk from exposure to ETS in the workplace.

MYTH #2 ETS is a significant contributor to indoor air pollution.

According to indoor air quality expert Gray Robertson, ETS was not a significant factor in 96 percent of 125 buildings he examined that were suffering from indoor air quality problems. Robertson notes that tobacco smoke in the air is a symptom -- not a cause -- of what he calls "sick building syndrome." Thirty-one percent of the buildings he examined had "wide-spread allergenic fungi" breeding in air conditioning systems. Other indoor air pollutants include building materials and furnishings, office equipment, supplies and cleaning products, mold spores, allergens and infectious agents. Banning tobacco smoke does nothing to alleviate the real causes of sick building syndrome. But it does eliminate the one visible clue that a ventilation problem exists.

MYTH #3: Smokers are absent from work more often than non-smokers.

A study undertaken by the National Chamber Foundation -- the research arm of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce -- found that group characteristics such as gender, age, race, education and lifestyle choices -- as reflected in the consumption of alcohol or tobacco products -- are not accurate indicators when it comes to predicting a worker's likely absentee rate. "Smoking," the NCF reported, "was found to have no significant effect on work loss."

MYTH #4: Smokers are less productive than non-smokers.

There is no evidence to suggest that smokers are any less productive than their non-smoking co-workers. One study, conducted by the University of Minnesota, found that smokers were actually more productive. According to a Bureau of National Affairs special report, a poll of companies that restrict smoking found that 92 percent noticed no change in productivity whatsoever.

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MYTH #5: Non-smokers have a legal right to a smoke-free workplace.

Both federal and state courts have consistently rejected claims that the United States Constitution guarantees individuals a right to a smoke-free work environment. Philip Morris does believe that non-smokers who do not want to be exposed to environmental tobacco smoke should be accommodated, but a total workplace smoking ban is not necessary to accomplish this; clean and easily accessible smoking areas can and should be provided for those employees who choose to smoke.

MYTH #6: Hiring only non-smokers will reduce insurance and other costs.

The same BNA study quoted above found that 95 percent of companies banning smoking reported no financial savings whatsoever.

We hope that your company will consider the benefits of accommodating both smokers and non-smokers, and refrain from implementing unnecessarily restrictive smoking bans.

If you have any questions, or if you would like advice on establishing a smoking policy for your company, please do not hesitate to call John R. Nelson, Vice President of Corporate Affairs for Philip Morris USA. His number is (212) 878-2462. He will be happy to answer any questions or provide information that may prove helpful in this matter.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

William I. Campbell

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